



Scouts donate care kits to Ireland

By JERRY MERIDETH/Public Relations Chief

Ireland Army Community Hospital

It was a visit to the hospital that 9-year-old Kyle Young didn't mind—no stethoscope, no needle, and no waiting room.

Kyle was among a dozen Boy and Girl scouts at Ireland Army Community Hospital to drop off donated items for patients facing overnight stays.

"I've stayed in a hospital before. It wasn't too bad," he said.

The reason behind the donation was to let patients know someone was thinking of them—"...so that they had something from somebody," Kyle explained.

The donated items—50 overnight kits with personal care items like shaving cream, razors and deodorant—ere brightly decorated in cloth gift bags handcrafted by parents, and boxes decorated at evening Scout meetings.

Scouts trooped into the hospital lobby and presented the items to hospital Chief of Nursing Col. Rhonda Earls Dec. 12.

According to Pack 155 den leader Kelly Katzenberger, the donation was part of a community service project for Scouting achievement. When the Scouts looked for a way to meet the community service requirement, Ireland seemed a textbook solution. She said scouting emphasizes community service as a way of becoming involved and helping others.

"Hospitals are always good places for Scouts to support," Katzenberger said. "This is part of their requirement to earn the 'Good Turn for America' badge."

Scouts earn badges, belt loops, even beads, by completing projects outlined in the Boy Scout manual. Those accomplishments are recognized at scout meetings.

"They need to learn that a community is all of us—together," Katzenberger said. "They have to learn to be good neighbors and that sometimes, we have to take care of others."

The overnight kits will be used for patients recovering from surgery or treated at the emergency room and kept overnight for observation. That group includes Soldiers, retired military members, and family members. Such simple charity can go a long way toward making a hospital stay a little brighter for patients.

"It means a great deal to Ireland that the Scouts would consider us for their volunteer efforts," Earls said. "The hospital is part of Fort Knox and we welcome interaction with the community."

Ireland maintains bed space for 30 overnight patients, including those recovering in the Medical Surgical Unit, and new moms and babies in the hospital's full service, Labor and Delivery Ward.

It took a month to gather the items—mostly by donations from families enrolled in the Scouting at

Fort Knox. The scouts are mainly family members of Soldiers stationed at Fort Knox and retired troops living in the local community.

The group that dropped off donations included Boy Scouts from Pack 155, with Webelos from both pack 155 and 128, and Brownies from Girl Scout Troop 1333.

Katzenberger's 6-year-old daughter, Amber captured the spirit of the season while recapping the reason local Scouts staged the project.

"I like hospitals sometimes," she said, watching the doctors and nurses pass by. "We did this to help the people who have to stay here."

She made her mom smile.

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